

RESPONSE TO COMMENTS

A draft National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit for Cominco Alaska Incorporated (Red Dog Port Site) was issued for public notice on June 25, 1998. The Public notice initiated a 30-day public comment period. EPA received two comments from Richard Harris, National Park Service, in a letter dated July 23, 1998. No other comments were received. The following summarizes the comments and EPA's response.

Comment: The commentor stated that there isn't a description of where the outlets for the effluent outfalls into the Chukchi Sea will be located.

Response: Page one of the permit and Section II of the Fact Sheet indicate the outfall location to be at approximately latitude 67° 34" and longitude 164° 03". Cominco has indicated that the Chukchi Sea discharge pipeline will be along the concentrates conveyor, onto the shallow water dock, and out through a submerged port diffuser located below the surface of the Chukchi Sea.

Comment: The commentor expressed concern that a long term discharge from the ocean outfall/s may effect migration patterns and/or focus subsistence harvest of biota at higher tropic levels in areas with a higher base concentration of heavy metals.

Response: EPA feels that the minor increase in nutrients from the two package plants along with the significant amount of mixing available at discharge will not effect the migration patterns of the vertebrates nor significantly enhance planktonic and algal growth, attracting biota. According to the mixing zone analysis submitted by Cominco Alaska Inc to the Alaska Department of Conservation, currently there isn't any subsistence harvesting within 1,600 meters of the discharge port. The permit limits for the metals in the mine drainage were determined in accordance with approved Alaska acute and chronic criteria. The chronic criteria adopted by the state accounts for the long term effects of metals on marine life.